

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 MCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 /082 W
-----242121 032723 /67

P 242028Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2555

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMCONSUL MONTREAL

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

ALL OTHER CONSULS IN CANADA (BY POUCH)

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 00890

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, CA

SUBJECT: CANADIAN VIEWS ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRIOR TO BELGRADE

REF: OTTAWA 631

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: WITH RELATIVELY LARGE AND POLITICALLY
POTENT EASTERN EUROPEAN EMIGRE AND JEWISH COMMUNITIES, CANADIAN
INTEREST IN HUMAN RIGHTS ASPECTS OF HELSINKI FINAL ACT IS
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INTENSE. POLITICIANS FAITHFULLY REFLECT THIS INTEREST,
AND MEDIA GIVE ISSUE VOLUME OF COVERAGE ABOUT SAME AS IN US.
BUREAUCRACY MORE RESTRAINED BUT ALL ELEMENTS ARE WATCHING
ACTIONS OF NEW CARTER ADMINISTRATION WITH INTEREST AND
APPROVAL. GOC IS LIKELY TO TAKE ITS CUE FROM US POSTURE UP TO
AND DURING BELGRADE CONFERENCE. END SUMMARY.

2. CANADIAN PUBLIC CONCERN FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ASPECTS OF HELSINKI FINAL ACT IS INTENSE, PARTICULARLY AMONG EASTERN EUROPEAN EMIGRE COMMUNITY WHICH IS NUMERICALLY SIGNIFICANT (FIRST OR SECOND GENERATION ABOUT FIVE PERCENT OF CANADIAN POPULATION), TIGHTLY-KNIT AND POLITICALLY ACTIVE. SUPPLEMENTARY AND TO EXTENT OVERLAPPING FORCE IS JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTERED IN METRO MONTREAL, TORONTO AND WINNIPEG. LAST TIME THIS GROUP FLEXED ITS POLITICAL MUSCLE WAS IN SEPTEMBER 1975 WHEN UN CRIME PREVENTION CONFERENCE BARRED FROM CANADA BECAUSE OF PLO REPRESENTATION.

3. IN VIEW OF POLITICAL PRESSURES NOTED ABOVE, CANADIAN POLITICIANS SPEAK OUT OFTEN ON HUMAN RIGHTS, AND INCREASINGLY AS BELGRADE CONFERENCE APPROACHES. HARDLY A WEEK PASSES WITHOUT SERIES OF QUESTIONS OR RESOLUTIONS IN HOUSE OF COMMONS RE HUMAN RIGHTS INFRINGEMENT. IN UNUSUAL SHOW OF UNANIMITY, FEBRUARY 15 HOUSE PASSED WITHOUT DISSENT RESOLUTION CONDEMNING SOVIET ARREST OF DISSIDENTS (REFTEL).

4. AT FEBRUARY 10 PRESS CONFERENCE, PM TRUDEAU VOICED CONCERN FOR BASKET THREE ISSUES AND LIMITED PROGRESS TO DATE IN THAT AREA. "...IT WAS CANADA BEFORE ALL OTHER COUNTRIES, WHICH EMPHASIZED WHAT WAS CALLED, I BELIEVE, THE THIRD BASKET...IF IT (I.E., DETENTE) IS NOT TIED TO THE FREE CIRCULATION OF IDEAS AND PEOPLE, IT IS AN ARTIFICIAL OPERATION".

5. FOCUS OF GOC ATTENTION IS ON DIVIDED FAMILIES' ISSUE WHICH EAST EUROPEAN EMIGRES PUSH WITH SPECIAL FERVOR. ACCORDING TO CHISTOFF, CSCE COORDINATOR AT MIN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (EXTAFF) CONFIDENTIAL

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EAST EUROPEAN IMMIGRANT GROUPS "DON'T CARE AT ALL ABOUT DISARMAMENT OR THINGS LIKE THAT. AS LONG AS THERE IS ONE DIVIDED FAMILY CASE UNRESOLVED, THEY CLAIM WE ARE NOT DOING ENOUGH".

6. WHEN ASKED ABOUT GOC PROGRESS IN SETTTLING DIVIDED FAMILIES CASES, CHISTOFF GAVE EMBASSY OFFICER FOLLOWING BRIEF RUNDOWN. WORST EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN WITH BULGARIANS. GOC SETTLED ONLY ONE OUT OF SEVEN CASES LAST YEAR AND NOW HAS 14 CASES OUTSTANDING. GOC EXPERIENCE WITH CZECHS HAD BEEN ABOUT AS BAD UNTIL EARLY NOVEMBER WHEN CZECH AUTHORITIES UNEXPECTEDLY APPROVED ABOUT TEN REUNIFICATION CASES INVOLVING CHILDREN. PROBLEM IS, CHISTOFF NOTED, THAT CZECHS POINT TO THIS MODEST PROGRESS AS SETTTLING ENTIRE ISSUE, WHEREAS THERE ARE 28 CASES OUTSTANDING.

7. WITH POLAND AND HUNGARY, GOC HAS HAD "VERY LITTLE PROBLEM" LARGELY BECAUSE CASELOAD IS SO SMALL WITH EACH COUNTRY. WITH POLAND, FOR EXAMPLE, THERE ARE NINE PENDING CASES AND WITH HUNGARY, ONLY SIX. RECORD WITH RUMANIANS HAS BEEN QUITE GOOD,

POSSIBLY BECAUSE OF RUMANIAN DESIRE TO RECEIVE CANADIAN NUCLEAR REACTR TECHNOLOGY. CHISTOFF NOTED THERE HAS BEEN SOME POSITIVE MOVEMENT WITH SOVIETS ALTHOUGH "IT HAS NOT BEEN FAST ENOUGH". 103 CASES WERE SETTLED IN 1974, 108 IN 1975, AND 128 IN 1976; 135 CASES REMAIN OUTSTANDING. CHISTOFF POINTED OUT THAT GOC DOES NOT COUNT JEWISH CASES SEPARATELY BUT INCLUDES THEM IN GENERAL TOTALS.

8. COMMENT: INTENSITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERN HERE VARIES, OF COURSE, ACCORDING TO PARTICULAR CONSTITUENCY, BUT EMIGRE GROUPS WITH FAMILY TIES IN EASTERN EUROPE AND SOVIET UNION ARE VIGILANT, VOCAL, AND UNRELENTING. POLITICIANS, IN PART FOR EXPEDIENCY, BUT ALSO THROUGH CONVICTION, ECHO THIS CONCERN WITH FREQUENT, STRONG INDICTMENTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS. MEDIA ATTENTION IS ROUGHLY EQUIVALENT TO MEDIA COVERAGE IN U.S. MOST CAUTIOUS ELEMENT IS EXTAFF BUREAUCRACY WHICH, AS CHISTOFF COMMENT ILLUSTRATES, FEELS SOMEWHAT BESIEGED OR PUT-UPON. SOME EXTAFF OFFICIALS MAY ALSO QUESTION UTILITY OF STREAM OF HARSH CRITICISM
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DIRECTED TOWARDS REGIMES OF EASTERN EUROPE AND SOVIET UNION. WHAT-EVER DEGREE OF COMMITMENT, HOWEVER, ALL ELEMENTS OF CANADIAN SOCIETY SHARE BASIC CONCERN OVER WELL-BEING OF PEOPLE LIVING IN THESE AREAS AND ARE CLOSELY WATCHING U.S. ATTITUDES TOWARDS HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES. STRONG POSITION OF CARTER ADMINISTRATION HAS STRUCK A RESPONSIVE AND FAVORABLE CHORD HERE. WE EXPECT GOC WILL WORK CLOSELY WITH U.S. IN PREPARATIONS FOR AND DURING BELGRADE CONFERENCE. DUEMLING

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, FOREIGN POLICY POSITION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 24-Feb-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977OTTAWA00890
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770064-1029
Format: TEL
From: OTTAWA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770213/aaaaalnu.tel
Line Count: 147
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 8564c1bf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 OTTAWA 631
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3241165
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CANADIAN VIEWS ON HUMAN RIGHTS PRIOR TO BELGRADE
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, CA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8564c1bf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009